

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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P 241135Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7955

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1968

NODIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US DM

SUBJ: US PROTEST OVER USE OF COTONOU AS STAGING POINT FOR
SOVIET/CUBAN AIRLIFT TO ANGOLA

REF STATE 300227

1. AS INSTRUCTED EMBASSY DELIVERED PROTEST NOTE TO FORNMIN
DEC 22 WITHIN A FEW HOURS OF REFTEL'S RECEIPT. WE WERE UN-
ABLE TO ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ANY OFFICIAL OF THE
MINISTRY (TO REINFORCE PROTEST WITH ORAL DEMARCHE) UNTIL
TODAY 24 DEC.

2. SINCE FORNMIN ALLADAYE USUALLY DOES NOT RECEIVE AMB EXCEPT
AFTER MAKING HIM WAIT FROM A FEW WEEKS TO TWO MONTHS,
DCM ASKED TO SEE FORNMIN DIRGEN. (NOTE: DESPITE SEVERAL REMINDERS
GIVEN TO FORNMINISTRY, AMB STILL AWIATING RESPONSE TO HIS
WRITTEN REQUEST OF 3 DEC TO SEE FORNMIN SOONEST ON OTHER URGENT
SUBJECTS.) AFTER BEING INFORMED OF OBJECT OF DCM'S PROPOSED
CALL, DIRGEN DECLINED TO SEE HIM AND ASKED THAT EDMOND CAKPO,
DIR OF MINISTRY DIVISION RESPONSIBLE FOR WESTERN EUROPE AND
NORTH AMERICAN, RECEIVE HIM.

3. ALTHOUGH CAKPO KNEW SUBJECT OF DCM'S VISIT, HE SAID
THIS MORNING HE HAD NOT SEEN OUR NOTE OF TWO DAYS AGO. DCM
HANDED HIM A COPY, AND MADE ORAL PRESENTATION STRESSING
IMPORTANCE USG ATTACHES TO THE MATTER. CAKPO READ NOTE BUT MADE
NO COMMENT OTHER THAN TO GIVE ASSURANCE THAT SUBSTANCE OF ORAL
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PRESENTATION WOULD BE PASSED TO DIRGEN AND MINISTER.

4. COMMENT: WE WOULD EXPECT OUR NOTE TO BE ON AGENDA OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING SCHEDULED FOR TODAY. WE DO NOT BELIEVE NOTE WILL HAVE ANY EFFECT ON PRB'S PRESENT PRACTICE OF ALLOWING SOVIETS TO USE FACILITIES OF COTONOU AIRPORT. WE WOULD EXPECT IT TO CONTRIBUTE, LIKE OTHER RECENT "BAD NEWS" IN BENIN-US RELATIONS TO STRENGTHENING OF THIS GOVT'S HOSTILITY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. WE BELIEVE KEREKOU REGIME WILL TAKE IDEOLOGICAL VIEW THAT THIS LITTLE "DEMOCRATIC" PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, WHICH HAS FREELY CHOSEN ITS OWN "OPTION", CANNOT LET ITSELF BE PUSHED AROUND BY BIG IMPERIALIST BULLY USA. QUITE POSSIBLY THERE WILL BE SOME KIND OF PUBLIC ATTACK ON THE USG, THOUGH WITHOUT ANY MENTION THAT THE COTONOU AIRPORT IS BEING USED FOR SOVIET/CUBAN AIRLIFT. END COMMENT.

5. RECOMMENDED ACTION: BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HELPFUL, IN ORDER TO ENLIGHTEN PUBLIC OPINION HERE AND PERHAPS IN OTHER COUNTRIES WHOSE GOVTS ARE PROVIDING FACILITIES TO SOVIETS, IF A STORY ON THE SUBJECT COULD BE RELEASED SOMEWHERE, FOR PICKUP BY LEADKING MEDIA AND VOA. PUBLIC HERE DOES NOT SUSPECT WHAT ITS GOVT IS DOING.

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